

Halo: Burning Bridges

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Summary: A small Covenant ship has docked on a Covenant loyalist planet for repairs. A squadron of SPARTAN-IVs and a force of marines must land on the planet and eradicate the remnants of the Covenant ground forces upon the planet. It all seems to be absolutely fine, no problems whatsoever...

Halo: Burning Bridges

**\*\*H\*\*ALO\*\*:** **\*\*\*\*B\*\*urning\*\* B\*\*ridges**

Captain Severus Fawkes lay on the ground, his visor shattered and his armour ruined. Over his wrecked throat and trickling down the gutters of the ruined street was his blood.

Numerous SPARTANs were strewn here and there. Three had the unmistakable sign of plasma damage – burnt armour and charred flesh. Others had missing limbs, removed by explosions or Covenant blades.

The marine casualties were worse: they lay dead or dying everywhere. Some were pushing their internal organs back in, screaming for help. Others moaned quietly, weeping as they bled to death on the unfamiliar planet, in the unfamiliar street, surrounded by unfamiliar people.

Lieutenant Thomas was wearing ruined blue armour, his torso covered almost completely in thick, dark ash, come from the most recently experienced combat between the human and Covenant ground forces. Thomas' helmet had a spider-web of cracks along the visor, rendering it useless.

Nearby lay Corporal Tephrin, knocking lightly on his helmet with his fist, groaning quietly in pain from the blast that had killed so many of the other men.

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><p>"Captain Severus Fawkes," announced Commander Taylor to the assembled men, "will be leading this mission. He will be taking with him Lieutenant Thomas, Lieutenant Jonathan, Corporal Tephrein and Corporal Jones. Assisting these will be fifty marines deployed via Pelicans at various zones to provide support. Now that the Covies aren't laying fire on Earth any more, we're going to hit the stubborn ones hard. We're sending down a lot of men, and without a doubt, some won't return. Gentlemen, I wish you all the best of luck. Congratulations on receiving command here, Captain." With that, Tephrein walked out of the room, his posture straight and his hands behind his back. He seemed to walk stiffly.<p>

"Okay," started the Captain, "as Commander Taylor just said, a lot of men are going to be deployed in a relatively small zone. This is because we have been assured the Covenant have small numbers here, but have well-defended locations scattered throughout the city. Now, do you have any questions?" Several hands were raised as Fawkes finished.

"Sir," said an ordinary marine, "isn't it pointless going in to finish off some Covies? Can't we just blow 'em up with a missile?"

"That," replied Fawkes "is an excellent question. The reason we are not using a missile to finish off the Covenant ground forces stationed here is because there may still be human civilians down there, in hiding. And second of all is that there is a small Covenant ship here. It has been very badly damaged by a recent skirmish, and my objectives are to reach where it is docked and kill the Covenant repairing it. We could of course, destroy it with a missile and not harm the city, but we are not sure how damaged the ship is. It may still have functioning cannons, and Command do not wish to see us all killed for something so pointless."

"Captain, what sort of men do they have down there?" asked another.

"Another reasonable question, I suppose. There are definitely numerous sangheili and uggoy troopers down there. There may also be mgalekgolo and kig-yar. To our knowledge there are not any jiralhanae warriors on the ground. We have reason to believe that apart from a few scouting vehicles, Ghosts; they have no vehicles down there that can cause any damage to us. Well, that isn't including their ship. At any rate, we will be deployed tomorrow at oh-nine-double-oh. Be ready, troopers."

"Oo-rah!" one or two men cheered. One or two men saluted, but most looked pretty nervous. After all, the mission was still pretty dangerous sounding.

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><p>Corporal Tephrein was a recently assigned SPARTAN-IV. He had served as an ODST for a brief period before being made one of the UNSCs finest, and he had seen a fair share of combat. The mission was supposed to be easy, and most men were quite happily discussing the mission whilst lying in their bunks. But for some reason, Tephrein felt uneasy, extremely nervous.<p>

"Corporal," someone said, causing Tephrin to look up and in to the face of Major Depp, a balding officer in his late thirties. He was renowned for his kindness to the troopers, and had been confided with many times by many troops. He held a position of great respect among the men, and most would bark like seals if he asked them to do so.

"Hello there Major," said Tephrin, "how are you?"

"Good," said Depp, "but how are you? You're taciturn and pale. You look like you've seen some sort of ghost walking about the ships. Are you feeling okay? If you're nervous about the operation, don't be. Providing intel is solid, you'll be fine down there. But if you carry on worrying, go visit the Med Bay and see if they'll give you something to help you with the nerves."

"This feels off," groaned Tephrin, "it just does. I know that there's probably nothing to worry about, but I'm absolutely terrified that intel is off, that we're going to get down there and find Wraiths and brutes. Those things are horrible; they'll rip a man in half for fun. Nasty buggers, they are."

"We've all been there," said Depp reassuringly, "we've all felt like you do now. Trust me; everything is going to be fine. If things start going sour we can send more men down to assist you, or even call for another frigate to support us. We've been promised back-up on this one."

"Thanks," said Tephrin, "I'll try not to worry about it. Thank you for the talkâ€¦ I'll do my best not to worry about it, but I can't promise you anything. I've never been more nervous in my life, I'm positive."

"Don't sweat it," said Depp, "everything has been thought of. We've got multiple rendezvous points all over the city. Get into trouble, you run back there, you call for help and get picked up by a Pelican."

"Thanks a lot, sir."

End  
file.